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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 25th meeting

Chairman:	Mr. KUKAN	(Slovakia)
later:	Ms. Al-Hamami (Vice-Chairman)	(Yemen)
later:	Mr. KUKAN (Chairman)	(Slovakia)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 113: REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES, RETURNEES, AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 107: ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 108: RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION (continued)

(a) RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION (continued)

(b) EFFECTIVE REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION THROUGH AUTONOMY (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 110: CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 112: INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL (continued)

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 113: REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS (continued) (A/48/12 and Add.1, A/48/64, A/48/91, A/48/134, A/48/181, A/48/184, A/48/207, A/48/294-S/26247, A/48/299-S/26261, A/48/308-S/26295, A/48/391, A/48/444).

1. Mr. BIZIMANA (Rwanda) said that Rwanda was seriously concerned at the deteriorating world-wide refugees situation, as it was both a receiving State and a State of origin of refugees and was still grappling with the problem of thousands of war-displaced persons. The international community must find a lasting solution to the world-wide refugee problems by continuing to encourage the bold and innovative initiatives of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and by resolving armed conflicts, one of the root causes of refugee flows. In that connection, Rwanda agreed that political initiatives were important and that there was a link between refugees and international peace and stability. While humanitarian assistance could help to reduce tensions significantly and promote reconciliation, it could not replace political solutions.

2. The implementation of the comprehensive Peace Agreement signed on 4 August 1993 at Arusha between his Government and the Rwandese Patriotic Front could help find a lasting solution to the problem of Rwandese war refugees. The Agreement included protocols on the repatriation of refugees and the resettlement of displaced persons and on the right of Rwandese refugees to return to their homeland. Rwanda appealed to OAU and UNHCR to finalize and submit as soon as possible the plan of action for Rwandese refugees with which they had been entrusted over two years previously at Dar es Salaam.

3. He thanked the international community for providing humanitarian assistance to the war-displaced persons. The appeal launched by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs for international assistance had helped somewhat, but their situation was still very critical and required increased support.

4. Ms. DOUDOYAN (Armenia) said that the social and economic problems in her country had been aggravated by the influx of 350,000 refugees fleeing from the conflict in Nagorny Karabakh, the continuing blockade of Armenia by Azerbaijan, the lack of safe transportation routes through Georgia due to the instability in neighbouring republics, and the de facto blockade of Armenia by Turkey. As a result, the country had been facing an energy crisis for years, which had led to increasing unemployment and brought virtually all economic activities to a standstill. In addition, only 20 per cent of the areas devastated by the 1988 earthquake, which had made half a million people homeless, had been reconstructed. Despite those economic hardships, Armenia was doing its utmost to provide whatever humanitarian assistance it could from its very limited capabilities to the refugees. In that connection, Armenia appreciated the assistance it had received from the international community.

5. Armenia hoped, however, that longer-term assistance would be provided to facilitate the development of democracy in the country. In that regard, the United Nations interim office in Armenia could play an important role in

(Ms. Doudoyan, Armenia)

national capacity-building, human development, and development of the social and private sectors, thereby helping eventually to integrate refugees into society.

6. The root causes of the refugee problem must be addressed in order to find lasting solutions. Humanitarian and human rights organizations must be encouraged to undertake preventive activities, and tolerance and respect for the rights of individuals, minorities and ethnic communities must be promoted. She hoped that the assistance would, in the long run, help her country to become self-reliant.

7. Armenia supported the multifaceted, comprehensive and solution-oriented approach advocated in the report of UNHCR (A/48/12 and Add.1). The priority task was to put an end to armed conflicts and to embark on a path towards an overall settlement of conflicts; that seemed to be the only realistic and far-reaching approach to the refugee problem.

8. Ms. SEMAFUMU (Uganda) said that the refugee problem clearly illustrated the extent of global interdependence. There had been a number of welcome developments, such as the signing of the Arusha Peace Agreement between the Rwandese Government and the Rwandese Patriotic Front and the conclusion of the process initiated by the International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA), which would have a positive impact on the global refugee situation. However, the achievements of UNHCR in providing assistance to refugees and returnees had been overshadowed by ceaseless refugee flows.

9. She welcomed the new emphasis on proactive relations with the mass media outlined in the High Commissioner's report. Publicizing successes alongside the problems was crucial to combating feelings of "donor fatigue" and helplessness. But in order to avoid a diversion of resources from assistance programmes, emphasis must be placed on collaborative efforts.

10. There was little doubt that the refugee situation remained grim. The fact that the number of internally displaced persons exceeded the number of refugees clearly indicated that the definition of refugees set out in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees was inadequate. The 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa provided a definition that reflected current realities. She hoped, however, that the increased attention devoted to displaced persons in the UNHCR report would lead to a broadening of the definition of refugee needs and that a comprehensive system for dealing with internally displaced persons would be formulated.

11. Owing to Africa's economic plight, the strain of hosting a third of the world's refugees was very destabilizing. The continent must therefore remain a priority for UNHCR programmes. Any attempt to tackle the problem must focus on ways of stemming the refugee flow as well as on preventing and resolving conflicts. While it was important for UNHCR and other relevant United Nations bodies to coordinate their work, it was even more important to maintain their humanitarian and neutral character. Integration of United Nations activities particularly at the field level should be collaborative while maintaining the separate identities and drawing on the comparative advantages of each agency.

(Ms. Semafumu, Uganda)

12. The pressure on the institution of asylum would be alleviated by measures aimed at rectifying the global socio-economic inequalities underlying migratory movements.

13. The three-pronged approach of UNHCR was relevant. She hoped that initiatives such as the Quick Impact Projects would act as a catalyst for longer-term development and would be integrated into national development plans and country programmes.

14. Mr. BARAKI (Afghanistan) said that the war in Afghanistan had inflicted enormous losses: over 1.7 million people had lost their lives. Of the order of 2 million had been disabled and over 2 million children had been orphaned. The war had brought agricultural activity to a halt, destroyed the economic infrastructure and destabilized civil and military administrations. It had also prompted a massive exodus to Pakistan, Iran and other countries. Afghan refugees were suffering from a shortage of food, medical care, housing, sanitation and educational opportunities. While his country was prepared to cooperate fully to expedite repatriation, it would require considerable resources to achieve that end. Afghanistan also had approximately 2 million internally displaced persons, who had lost their homes and property.

15. Following the collapse of the former Communist regime, and the establishment of the Islamic State of Afghanistan in April 1992, the Government had taken measures to create conditions amenable to the voluntary repatriation of refugees and the resettlement of displaced persons. It had housed many in schools, industrial complexes and public buildings. Tripartite agreements had been concluded between UNHCR and the Governments of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, resulting in the return of more than 1 million people. Owing, however, to financial and technical problems, as well as to the political situation, repatriation had slowed. After the conflicts of August 1992, significant numbers of Kabul residents had fled to other provinces or to neighbouring countries.

16. Another major obstacle to the return of refugees was the existence throughout Afghanistan, of millions of land mines, which killed or disabled nearly 100 people monthly. Afghanistan therefore enthusiastically joined with the sponsors of the draft resolution proposed by the European Community concerning the removal of land mines from war-stricken countries. In order to restore normal living conditions to Afghanistan, massive assistance from the world community was required. Unfortunately, certain donors had shown reluctance to provide promised assistance, citing security concerns. His delegation wished to assure the world community that most regions of Afghanistan were currently secure enough to permit projects to commence. As, even under the best conditions, repatriation could not be rapidly accomplished, it urged Iran, Pakistan, and other countries to continue to provide humanitarian assistance as well as legal protection to Afghan refugees.

17. Since the onset of the turmoil in Tajikistan in 1992, approximately 100,000 Tajiks had taken refuge in Afghanistan. Despite great economic difficulty, Afghanistan had been providing assistance to them with the cooperation of UNHCR. In 1993, Afghanistan and Tajikistan had issued a joint communiqué on the voluntary return of Tajik refugees to their country, made possible by the

(Mr. Baraki, Afghanistan)

willingness of Tajikistan to negotiate with the opposition. Furthermore, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and UNHCR were currently drafting a tripartite agreement regarding the voluntary repatriation of Tajiks. In the meantime, Afghanistan was committed to providing assistance to the significant number of Tajiks that remained within its borders.

18. Mrs. KOVALSKA (Ukraine) said that efforts to mitigate or prevent conflicts deriving from ethnic differences should be intensified at the national level. The international community, for its part, must direct its attention towards resolving the root causes of such conflicts and to elaborating effective policies in the area of ethnic relations. In the view of Ukraine, such policies must hinge on democratization, the independence of the judiciary and the rule of law, including basic respect for human rights, with particular attention to the cultural and educational rights of minorities. Priority must be placed as well on accession to international human rights instruments, and on bringing national law into conformity with international law. Bilateral cooperation was the preferred channel for resolving international tensions, but where one party declined to negotiate, the international community must be called on to mediate.

19. To protect the rights of national minorities, and concomitantly, to avert mass migrations in the new States of the former Soviet Union, international cooperation would be needed. It should be noted that, in terms of historical significance, the collapse of the USSR equalled the disintegration of the colonial system. Ukraine, for its part, endeavoured to ensure equal rights for all nationalities within its territory. If a State did not care for minorities within its territory, it could not expect its own nationals residing in other countries to be treated with respect.

20. The recent agreement signed by the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States was a first step towards the protection of the rights of refugees; while it maintained that constitutions could require the mandatory study of the official national languages in schools, it also stipulated that a lack of knowledge of the local language must not be a cause for discrimination. She stressed, however, that Ukraine rejected the notion that the Russian Federation had the right to protect Russian-speaking people residing outside its frontiers since the speakers of that language belonged to any number of ethnic groups.

21. Ukraine was host to a growing number of refugees from ethnic-conflict areas, including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Russian Federation, and the Parliament was taking measures to strengthen the legal framework that regulated the problem of refugees. In addition, Ukraine had been accorded observer status with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and was developing close ties with UNHCR.

22. The forcible deportations from Ukraine under former national policy was another related problem. Over 180,000 Crimean Tartars had returned, as well as many Ukrainians, Germans, Greeks and Bulgarians, among others. The new Government had established a fund for the deported peoples of the Crimea and had adopted a programme for the resettlement of returnees. That process was, however, impeded by a shortage of resources. Lastly, Ukraine would welcome international cooperation within the framework of UNHCR programmes. It also

(Mrs. Kovalska, Ukraine)

expected to work more closely with the regional bureau of UNHCR in protecting the rights of refugees and deportees.

23. Ms. Al-Hamami (Yemen), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

24. Mr. KITTIKHOUN (Lao People's Democratic Republic) noted that, since the creation of UNHCR, the number of refugees world wide had increased from 1 million to over 18 million. Invoking the gravity of the refugee crises in Africa and Europe and praising the pivotal role of UNHCR in combating that problem, he noted that other regions of the world also merited serious consideration.

25. In South-East Asia, the refugee problem had recently taken a positive turn. In Viet Nam, clandestine departures were rare, and many Vietnamese refugees had opted for voluntary repatriation. As for Cambodia, in accordance with the relevant agreements all Cambodian refugees had been enabled to return home from Thailand and other countries of the region under UNHCR auspices. In addition, more than 17,000 Lao refugees had returned to their country. That trend, begun in 1980, had picked up speed in 1988 with the adoption by the Lao Government of an economic reform policy which had restored confidence in the future for Lao refugees returning home. Significantly, the Lao people had become more optimistic and rarely left the country clandestinely. The implementation of the voluntary repatriation programme was none the less a complex endeavour, and the Government had encountered numerous technical problems in the preparation of resettlement sites for returning refugees. The difficulty was exacerbated by the perpetuation of diabolical schemes involving the use of refugees as cannon-fodder for the purpose of undermining the social order. The Lao People's Democratic Republic was none the less committed to welcoming back all those Lao willing to return. The Tripartite Thai/Lao/UNHCR Meeting held in his country in July 1993 had revivified common efforts to speed their repatriation.

26. Mr. MUTHAURA (Kenya) said that the refugee problem was an intricate issue that had serious implications for the host countries and for the entire international community. According to the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/48/12), the global refugee situation had deteriorated since the previous year, as demonstrated by the increase of the world's refugee population to a staggering 18.9 million at the beginning of 1993. The overall refugee situation in Africa, as reflected in the Secretary-General's report on assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa (A/48/444), presented an even more sobering picture. In Africa alone, the refugee population had reached 6 million and there were over 15 million displaced persons.

27. His country was particularly concerned by the situation in the Horn of Africa, where a combination of factors, including civil conflict and persistent drought, had exacerbated an already unbearable situation. The disintegration of law and order in Somalia and the collapse of government authority had produced almost 1 million Somali refugees. Kenya was currently hosting about 500,000 of them, registered and unregistered, as well as tens of thousands of refugees from other neighbouring States. Since independence, Kenya had continuously allowed entry to asylum-seekers and refugees, and had handled them in a humanitarian manner, consistent with international instruments governing treatment of

(Mr. Muthaura, Kenya)

refugees. His delegation supported the Secretary-General's assessment that the persistent security problems facing north-eastern Kenya posed a challenge not only to the Kenyan authorities but to the international community as a whole. The difficulties of access from within Somalia to the Somali/Kenyan border areas had hampered the efforts of his Government and the international community to restore stability and order in the region.

28. His delegation commended UNHCR and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs for their efforts, under very strenuous conditions, to deal with various emergencies and natural disasters in other parts of the world. He welcomed the work of UNHCR and other United Nations agencies to provide simultaneous assistance to refugees, returnees, displaced persons and local populations. As peace was being restored in Somalia, his Government was cooperating with UNHCR to accelerate the voluntary repatriation of refugees. He urged the United Nations and the donor community to assist his country with programmes for the rehabilitation of the physical and social infrastructure and the restoration of the region's economy.

29. Kenya was requesting the Secretary-General to reinforce United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) patrols along the Somali side of the border to complement the efforts of security personnel on the Kenyan side. Joint security efforts would significantly reduce the flow of armed gangs and individuals into Kenya. His Government was particularly concerned about the infiltration of weapons into Kenya as a result of the Somali conflict. Those arms had been used for violent crimes that had resulted in the loss of innocent lives.

30. With regard to the root causes of the refugee problem, his delegation was convinced that, apart from resettlement programmes offered by various countries, a lasting solution could only be found in the peaceful settlement of disputes and in peaceful coexistence.

31. Mr. Kukan (Slovakia) resumed the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 107: ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued) (A/C.3/48/L.14 and L.16)

Draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.14)

32. Mrs. PILOTO (Zimbabwe), speaking on behalf of the front-line States of southern Africa introduced draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.14 on the status of the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid. The front-line States believed that apartheid existed in several forms at the international level. Therefore, draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.14 addressed the international community as a whole, rather than specific Governments. The draft resolution emphasized the importance of the universal ratification of the Convention, which would serve to implement the ideals of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights instruments, and appealed to those States that had not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention without further delay. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

33. Ms. KAMAL (Secretary of the Committee) said that a correction should be made to the first preambular paragraph of the English text of draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.14 by including a reference to resolution 46/184 of 16 December 1991.

Draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.16

34. Ms. TOMIC (Slovenia), introducing, on behalf of the sponsors, draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.16 on the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, said that Egypt, Nigeria, and Pakistan had joined the sponsors. The draft resolution welcomed the general recommendations adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination which concretized the obligations of States parties with regard to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and encouraged the Committee to continue its efforts to enhance its contributions in the prevention of racial discrimination. The draft resolution requested the Secretary-General to continue to ensure adequate funding for the Committee and strongly appealed to all States parties, especially those in arrears, to fulfil their financial obligations under article 8, paragraph 6, of the Convention. The sponsors hoped that it would be adopted without a vote.

AGENDA ITEM 108: RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION (continued)

(a) RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION (continued) (A/C.3/48/L.12, L.15 and L.19)

Draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.12

35. Mr. FERNANDEZ (Cuba), speaking on behalf of the sponsors, introduced draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.12 on the use of mercenaries. He said that paragraph 4 should be moved to the preambular part and inserted immediately following the ninth preambular paragraph, the words "Notes with concern" being replaced by "Deeply concerned about". The draft resolution condemned the continued recruitment, financing, training, assembly, transit and use of mercenaries as illicit practices that represented a threat to all States and violated the Charter of the United Nations. Despite the end of the cold war, there was a growing trend to resort to the use of mercenaries for various illicit activities that violated human rights and impeded the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination. The sponsors of the draft resolution hoped that it would receive the unequivocal support of a majority of States.

Draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.15

36. Mr. KHAN (Pakistan) introduced, on behalf of the sponsors, draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.15 on the universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination. The text was almost identical to that of resolution 47/83, adopted without a vote at the previous session. Some minor technical changes had been made to update the draft resolution by referring to the latest resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Commission on Human Rights.

37. The draft resolution welcomed the progressive exercise of the right to self-determination by peoples under colonial, foreign or alien occupation and stressed that the realization of the right to self-determination was the fundamental condition for the effective guarantee and observance of human

(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

rights. The draft resolution declared its firm opposition to acts of foreign military intervention, aggression and occupation and called upon those States responsible to cease immediately their military intervention in and occupation of foreign countries and territories and all acts of repression, discrimination, exploitation and maltreatment. It deplored the plight of refugees and reaffirmed their right to return to their homes voluntarily in safety and honour. The sponsors of the draft resolution hoped that it would be adopted without a vote.

Draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.19

38. Mr. SAHRAOUI (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, introduced draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.19 on the importance of the universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination and of the speedy granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples for the effective guarantee and observance of human rights.

39. The draft resolution took into account changes that had occurred on the international scene since the previous session. Those paragraphs that contradicted the positive changes that had occurred in South Africa, including paragraphs on the economic sanctions, had been deleted. The paragraphs regarding Palestine had been reworded to reflect the situation following the recent signing of the Declaration of Principles between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel. All paragraphs regarding the specific situations of Lesotho, Lebanon, Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Western Sahara and the Comoros had been updated to reflect the current situation in those areas. The African Group hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

(b) EFFECTIVE REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION THROUGH AUTONOMY (continued) (A/C.3/48/L.17)

Draft decision A/C.3/48/L.17

40. Mrs. FRITSCHE (Liechtenstein) introduced draft decision A/C.3/48/L.17 entitled "Effective realization of the right of self-determination through autonomy" on behalf of Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Estonia, Nigeria, Poland, Ukraine, Uruguay, Vanuatu and her own delegation. The underlying concern was to identify steps that could be taken to avoid conflict when adequate means of self-expression were denied. The concept of autonomy was very flexible and could be developed in particular cases to the extent to which the parties concerned might find it useful. Autonomy represented a choice and was not something to be imposed on States from outside.

41. The debate had shown that the Liechtenstein initiative had raised important issues which many delegations believed merited further consideration. In view of the sensitive nature of the matter, the draft decision aimed only at including the sub-item in the agenda of the next session of the General Assembly. The sponsors hoped that it would be supported.

42. Mrs. de BARISH (Costa Rica) said that her delegation wished to join the sponsors of draft decision A/C.3/48/L.17.

AGENDA ITEM 110: CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.9/Rev.1

43. Mr. MARRERO (United States of America), speaking on behalf of the sponsors, introduced draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.9/Rev.1 on the prevention of alien smuggling. Alien smuggling was a global criminal activity involving highly organized international crime syndicates which earned billions of dollars in illicit revenues. It was a trade in human cargo that often ended with the migrants being forced into lives of crime or indentured servitude to pay for their passage. Alien smuggling involved nearly all Member States as the source, transit route, flag State or destination for smuggling operations.

44. A number of countries, including the United States, had taken action to stop alien smuggling by introducing legislation and increasing vigilance at coastal ports, airports and land borders. To combat that growing problem, his delegation was introducing a draft resolution recommending measures that could and should be taken to prevent alien smuggling. The draft resolution sought to unite all nations in a common effort to confront the problem and called upon Member States and relevant international organizations to treat alien smuggling as a crime and to enforce domestic laws and international standards in order to frustrate attempts by smugglers to transport their human cargo by land, sea and air. The sponsors of the draft resolution hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.10/Rev.1

45. Mr. RUSTICO (Italy), speaking on behalf of the original sponsors and Finland, Luxembourg, Nicaragua, Norway and Sweden, introduced draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.10/Rev.1. He said that it underlined the importance of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, endorsed the relevant resolutions of the Economic and Social Council as recommended by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, reaffirmed the importance of the forthcoming Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in the hope that at its next session the Economic and Social Council would decide on the venue for the Congress, and sought to strengthen international cooperation, particularly in the fight against transnational organized crime. In that connection, the World Ministerial Conference on Organized Transnational Crime, to be held in Italy in the last quarter of 1994, should be a useful opportunity to evaluate results achieved and set new targets. It was hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

AGENDA ITEM 112: INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.18

46. Mrs. SHERMAN-PETER (Bahamas), speaking on behalf of the original sponsors and Bangladesh, Costa Rica and Guatemala, introduced draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.18 on International action to combat drug abuse and illicit production and trafficking. The omnibus draft resolution covered subjects that had previously been treated in separate resolutions, thus rationalizing not only

(Mrs. Sherman-Peter, Bahamas)

the Committee's work but also reflecting the priority attached to international cooperation on drugs. The sponsors believed that the draft resolution would not only contribute significantly to the work of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme but would also focus international cooperation in drug-abuse control generally.

47. Mr. ZMEYEVSKY (Russian Federation), Mrs. KABA (Côte d'Ivoire) and Mrs. BENNANI (Morocco) said that they wished to join the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.18.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

48. The CHAIRMAN said that, at its 50th plenary meeting on 4 November, the General Assembly had decided to allocate to the Third Committee item 172 entitled "Necessity of adopting effective measures for the promotion and protection of the rights of children throughout the world who are victims of especially difficult circumstances, including armed conflicts". He suggested that the Committee should consider that item when it took up item 114 (b) and (c) and item 115, from 23 November to 2 December.

49. It was so decided.

50. The CHAIRMAN, reporting to the Committee on the informal consultations undertaken to set up a working group on establishing the post of a High Commissioner for Human Rights, said that it had not been possible to reach agreement on a mandate for such a working group, in spite of the thorough discussions by interested delegations and the efforts made by the Chair. At the current stage, he felt that the positions put forward by the delegations concerned were irreconcilable and he did not believe there was a way to reach agreement quickly. Under those circumstances, the Chair was open to constructive proposals on ways to deal with the issue. Any such proposals should take into account the need for transparency in defining the mandate of the working group and for the participation by all interested delegations.

51. Mr. SUTOYO (Indonesia) said that the non-aligned countries had made a substantial compromise in the informal consultations on defining the mandate of the working group in order to find an acceptable solution. While regretting the lack of progress, the non-aligned countries felt that it was not impossible to reach agreement, particularly in the context of the proposal submitted by those countries. Accordingly, he urged the Chairman to continue his initiative aimed at reaching consensus, the only reasonable course of action.

52. Mrs. ESPINOSA (Mexico) said that her delegation attached great importance to the question of establishing the post of a High Commissioner for Human Rights and stressed the need to begin work as soon as possible within the framework of transparent and orderly consultations. She commended the Chairman for the efforts he had made in conducting the informal consultations and stressed her delegation's profound regret that it had not been possible to discuss the question with the care that it deserved. Mexico was prepared to continue to participate in consultations on the matter.

53. Mr. JIN Yongjian (China) commended the efforts made by the Chairman in holding the informal consultations. The non-aligned countries had made a considerable effort to reach agreement and had showed great flexibility in the consultations. It was regrettable that the Committee had been unable to agree on establishing the working group. That was an important and very sensitive issue. He hoped that the Chairman would continue to try to bring about a consensus so that consultations on the substantive issues could begin at an early date.

54. Mr. SABOIA (Brazil) commended the Chairman's efforts to reach agreement on establishing the working group and stressed that his country attached great importance to the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights. Paragraph 18 of that document recommended to the General Assembly that it should begin, as a matter of priority, consideration of the question of the establishment of the post of a High Commissioner for Human Rights for the promotion and protection of all human rights. It was regrettable that in spite of the Chairman's efforts, the Committee had been unable to make progress towards implementing that recommendation. He urged the Chairman to continue consultations with interested delegations to see whether, with the necessary flexibility and political will, it would be possible to continue consideration of the question, since it was a matter of priority to find a balanced approach to ensure that the Vienna Declaration was properly implemented by the General Assembly.

55. Mr. VAN CRAEN (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Community, reaffirmed the importance which the Community attached to the establishment of the post of a High Commissioner for Human Rights. For almost four weeks, its member States had actively participated in the informal consultations to find the most appropriate way to consider that question at the current session. In a spirit of cooperation and in order to make it possible to begin work immediately, the European Community had put forward several proposals to accommodate the delegations that had expressed reservations. The only reaction to those proposals had been the view that they were unacceptable or insufficient.

56. He commended the Chairman's untiring efforts. The Community had willingly participated in the consultations in a positive and flexible manner and sincerely regretted that no progress had been made. Nevertheless, they remained open to all proposals which would enable the Committee to discuss the substance of the matter. The Community would participate in such discussions in a desire to reach consensus and achieve the necessary results.

57. Ms. MURUGESAN (India) commended the Chairman's efforts. Her delegation believed that a working group was the best way to consider the question and that the work should be guided by a spirit of consensus. Some progress had been made in the informal consultations and there were several points of agreement. Her delegation felt that the Chairman should continue to hold consultations on setting up the working group.

58. Mr. TROTTIER (Canada) said that his delegation appreciated the efforts by the Chairman to reach agreement on setting up the working group. Like the European Community, Canada had put forward various proposals, which had not been

(Mr. Trottier, Canada)

accepted. While it was disappointing that the positions seemed irreconcilable, his delegation felt that the consultations should continue.

59. Mr. DEKANY (Hungary) said that his country was committed to the cause of all human rights and deeply regretted that it had been impossible to find a solution acceptable to all delegations. Nevertheless, Hungary looked forward to the successful conclusion of consultations on setting up the working group.

60. Mrs. de BARISH (Costa Rica) said that her delegation joined others in supporting the Chairman's efforts and regretted that the positions expressed during the consultations were irreconcilable. She hoped that it would be possible to reach an agreement on the question, in view of the importance of promoting human rights throughout the world.

61. Mr. MARRERO (United States of America) said that his delegation also wished to commend the Chairman's efforts. On the basis of the proposals made by delegations, including that of the United States, the Chairman had put forward a compromise. In a spirit of cooperation, his Government had been prepared to proceed on that basis. Unfortunately, the Chairman's suggestion had not been acceptable to all delegations. The question of a High Commissioner for Human Rights required special consideration and should be dealt with in a working group. His delegation was ready to listen to new ideas, but regretted that the Committee had been unable to reach a consensus.

62. Ms. DIAKITE (Mali) commended the Chairman for his efforts to reach a consensus and said that her delegation was fully prepared to participate in further consultations to find a solution in keeping the consensus reached in Vienna.

63. The CHAIRMAN said that he would assess the situation in the light of the views expressed and report back to the Committee in due course.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.